

### 3. Descriptive analysis of well-being outcomes

We begin our empirical analysis by examining how food hardships, other adverse events, and subjective assessments of life changes vary with income, work status, and marital status. Table 2 reports conditional averages of several of the well-being measures. The first three columns of Table 2 list statistics from the six-item food insecurity scale, including the percentage of households that report being food insecure, the percentage of households that report being food insecure with hunger, and the average number of affirmative responses among the underlying items. The next two columns list estimates of the percentage of households that reported experiencing any of the nine other adverse events and the average number of events they experienced. The last three columns report the percentages of household respondents that reported feeling worse about themselves, worrying more about their families, and feeling more stress since exiting the Food Stamp Program twelve months earlier.

The first seven rows in Table 2 report these statistics separately depending on people's responses to the total monthly income question. Reports of food hardships generally decline with income, though the pattern is not entirely uniform. For example, families with monthly incomes of \$500-\$999 report more food hardships than families with slightly lower incomes. Reports of other adverse events initially increase with income but fall thereafter. Similarly, negative subjective assessments of life changes initially increase with income but generally fall thereafter. The patterns mostly fit the expected result that hardships should be negatively associated with income. However, there are deviations, which may reflect misreporting in the income measure or may be a result of not accounting for other characteristics of the respondents and their families.

The next three rows report statistics separately for respondents who reported that they were currently working, those who were not currently working but had worked in the last year, and those who had not worked in the last year. Food hardships, other adverse events, and negative assessments of life changes are all lower among respondents who were currently working than among those who were not working. However, when we examine differences in problems between people who had been out of work for at least a year and those who had worked more recently, there is no consistent pattern.

Because of possible reporting problems in the work status measure, we repeated the analysis using UI covered-employment data. The next three rows from Table 2 report statistics separately for respondents with any covered earnings in the preceding quarter, respondents with any covered earnings in the previous three quarters, and respondents with no covered earnings in the preceding year. The associations based on the UI measures are similar to those based on self-reported work status, just slightly attenuated. Thus, the observed differences between working and non-working respondents and the absence of consistent differences between those who recently stopped working and those who had not worked in a year appear to be genuine. One possible explanation for the latter pattern is that people's perceptions of problems may adjust

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over time after losing a job, even if there is no objective improvement in their material well-being. Another explanation may be reverse causality, with people who perceive fewer problems being less motivated to find a job.

The final two rows of Table 2 list statistics that were calculated separately for one- and two-parent households. Bauman (1999), Lerman (2002a,b), Ribar (2005) and others have found that reports of food hardships, material deprivations and financial strains are lower among two-parent households than one-parent households, even when income and other characteristics are accounted for. However, we do not see that pattern in the South Carolina survey data. For several measures, including the indicators for food insecurity with hunger and for experiencing any adverse events, one-parent households are slightly more likely to report problems, but for other measures, they are slightly less likely to report problems. Thus, the presence of an additional parent does not appear to be protective in these data.

**Table 2. Cross-tabulation of Well-being Measures and Household Characteristics**

	6-item food insecurity scale			Other adverse events		Changes in subjective assessments		
	Percent food insecure	Percent food insecure with hunger	Average count of hardships	Percent experiencing any events	Average count of events	Percent who feel worse	Percent who worry more	Percent who feel more stress
Total monthly income								
\$0	59.3	14.8	2.22	63.0	1.52	25.9	63.0	55.6
\$1-\$499	51.2	14.6	2.00	82.9	2.37	29.3	70.7	61.0
\$500-\$999	53.7	15.3	2.12	72.3	2.06	14.1	58.8	51.4
\$1000-\$1499	51.5	12.6	1.91	70.7	1.67	12.1	57.1	47.5
\$1500-\$1999	47.7	15.1	1.84	67.4	1.57	14.0	46.5	44.2
over \$2000	42.4	6.1	1.44	53.0	1.11	3.0	31.8	37.9
Don't know / refused	39.6	6.3	1.35	68.8	1.38	12.5	54.2	33.3
Work status								
Currently working	47.5	11.1	1.79	68.1	1.66	10.0	48.9	42.8
Worked in last year	54.1	17.6	2.13	72.9	1.78	25.9	72.9	62.4
Did not work in last year	56.9	15.5	2.09	70.7	1.90	19.0	62.1	53.4
UI status								
UI in current quarter	49.4	13.1	1.88	68.3	1.75	11.9	53.4	47.1
UI in last year	52.5	11.5	1.90	85.2	1.74	23.0	59.0	47.5
No UI in last year	51.0	12.4	1.91	65.4	1.65	15.0	55.6	47.7
Marital status								
Single parent	49.3	15.5	1.94	69.7	1.68	14.8	53.6	47.7
Married parent	50.7	10.3	1.84	68.7	1.76	12.7	55.2	46.9

Note: Statistics calculated from survey of former food stamp families in South Carolina (Richardson et al. 2003).